

# NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Beverly Brockus, President  
Brockus Public Relations  
703.356.6563  
[bbrockus@cox.net](mailto:bbrockus@cox.net)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2004

## **FRENCH GOVERNMENT HONORS D.C.'S PATRICIA RAVENSCROFT FOR EXTRAORDINARY CULINARY TOURS**

**Washington, D.C.** - Christian Berger, the Agricultural Counselor at the French Embassy in Washington, has announced that Patricia Ravenscroft, president of Les Liaisons Délicieuses, is among a handful of Americans – and the only Washingtonian - chosen to receive the Mérite Agricole in 2004. The award honors those who have made outstanding contributions in support and advancement of agriculture. The French Minister of Agriculture will send her an official announcement and diploma naming her as a Chevalière de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole. Monsieur Berger will present a medal to her at a reception at the Embassy this fall.

The French government has confirmed what participants in Patti's deluxe culinary tours to France, Morocco, and Quebec Province over the past 10 years already know: her trips are outstanding. Her gastronomic adventures include cooking classes and dining with outstanding (often Michelin-starred) chefs, luxurious accommodations, intimate groups of eight to ten like-minded travelers, excursions to markets and wineries, invitations to private homes – in short, a behind-the-scenes cultural experience not available to other visitors.

The French Agricultural Counselor has a keen interest in geographic indicators – the vital link between the food products and their origin or *terroir*, of which Champagne and Roquefort are good examples. When he met Patti Ravenscroft, he was impressed by her appreciation of this concept and her tours for small groups to help them better understand the connection between a particular region, its food, and the cooking experience.

- more -

The nomination process is secret: Patti was unaware that the Agricultural Minister had submitted her name and supporting biographical information to the French government for consideration. Because Patti is American, the nomination was channeled through the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the French Minister of Agriculture, who made the final decision.

The Mérite Agricole dates to 1883 and is France's oldest civil award. It may be viewed as the agricultural version of the famous military award, the "Légion d'Honneur." There are three tiers of the award – chevalier, officer, and commander (very few at this top level). Other 2004 recipients in the U.S. include noted chefs, leading French wine importers and distributors, and an innovative professor of agriculture in the Midwest.

Additional information about Les Liaisons Délicieuses is available at 202.966.1810, 887.966.1810 (toll-free), or [www.cookfrance.com](http://www.cookfrance.com).

#####